

CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

ANSWER KEY

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: 631BXC

Questions: 44

Maximum Marks: 200

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SELECTIONS USED

Source	Previous-year board
Subject	English Language & Literature
Lessons	Two Stories about Flying
Year	2022-2026
Questions selected	44

Composition — Types: 16 Short · 16 literature_extract · 12 literature_long

Q1.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions in 100–120 words:

Explore the contrasting images of the tiger in 'A Tiger in the Zoo' and the tiger in 'How to Tell Wild Animals'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q10 (b)

♦ 2.1 A Tiger in the Zoo

3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

A Tiger in the Zoo presents a caged tiger — restless, helpless, and stripped of his natural glory. The tiger moves with "quiet rage" behind bars, his freedom denied. He should be lurking in the shadow of the forest, terrorising the village at the edge of the jungle. Instead, he is locked in a concrete cell, ignoring visitors, staring at the stars with a longing for freedom. The image evokes pity and anger at human cruelty.

In **How to Tell Wild Animals**, the tiger is portrayed humorously as a creature encountered in the wild — fierce, attacking, and powerful. If a large, tawny beast leaps on you and roars, it is an Asian lion; if it tears your limb from limb, it is a Bengal tiger. The tiger here is wild, dangerous, and free — comic in tone but instinctively ferocious.

Thus, one poem evokes sympathy for a caged, dignified creature; the other uses the tiger's deadly nature for gentle humour.

Explanation

- Examiners look for **contrast**: caged vs wild, tone of sadness vs humour, dignity vs danger.
- Quote or closely reference specific lines/ideas from each poem.
- Use literary terms: **imagery, tone, mood** — even briefly — to score full marks.
- Keep comparison structured: don't mix both poems in every sentence; handle one, then the other, then contrast.

Q2.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in 100-120 words: You have been chosen to address the student gathering from the nearby schools, to speak on "How to Deal with Loss – Personal or Material". Prepare the speech draft in not more than 120 words, with reference to the commonality of themes in John Berryman's 'The Ball Poem' and 'A Sermon at Benaras'. You may begin this way. Good Morning everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss. You may end in this way – To conclude, I'd like to say that – Thank you.

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q10(b)

◆ 3.4 The Ball Poem

The Sermon at Benares

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Model Answer

Good Morning everyone. Today, I'd like to discuss two pieces of literature that offer a powerful insight into how we can learn to deal with loss.

John Berryman's *The Ball Poem* shows a young boy losing his ball and learning that loss is an inevitable part of life. He must accept it and move on, understanding that material things cannot be recovered. Similarly, in *A Sermon at Benares*, the Buddha teaches Kisa Gotami — who has lost her child — that death and loss are universal. No household is untouched by grief.

Both texts share the theme that loss is common to all humanity. Grieving is natural, but clinging to what is lost only deepens suffering. The true lesson is acceptance — learning to let go and find strength within ourselves.

To conclude, I'd like to say that loss, whether personal or material, teaches us resilience. Accepting it as part of life helps us heal and grow stronger. — **Thank you.**

Explanation

- The question asks for a **speech**, so opening and closing lines (given) must be included.
- Examiners look for: correct reference to **both** texts, identification of the **common theme** (universality/inevitability of loss + acceptance), and a coherent speech structure.
- Keep the tone formal but warm — it is a student speech.
- Word count should stay within 120 words; avoid padding.
- The key literary link: both texts teach that loss is **universal** and **acceptance** is the only healthy response.

Q3.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words: Analyse the similarities and differences between the young seagull from "Two stories about flying" and Lencho from "A Letter to God", and provide a rationale for the significant role faith plays in challenging and adverse situations in life.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/4/1 Q10.II

♦ Two Stories about Flying

A Letter to God

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Model Answer

Similarities:

Both the young seagull and Lencho face desperate, seemingly hopeless situations. The seagull is paralysed by fear of flying; Lencho's crops are destroyed by hail, leaving his family starving. Both are driven by a basic need — hunger — and both ultimately overcome their crisis through an act of faith and trust.

Differences:

The seagull's faith is instinctive; he trusts his wings only when hunger forces him to dive. Lencho's faith is conscious and unwavering — he believes so completely in God that he writes a letter asking for money, never doubting he will be heard.

Role of Faith:

In adversity, faith acts as the driving force that pushes individuals beyond their limits. Without the seagull's instinctive trust in his wings, he would have starved. Without Lencho's absolute faith in God, he would have surrendered to despair. Both stories show that faith — whether instinctive or spiritual — gives courage to act when circumstances seem impossible.

Source: *His First Flight*, Chapter 3; *A Letter to God*, Chapter 1

Explanation

- Examiners look for **both** stories addressed equally, a clear **similarity + difference structure**, and a concluding point on **faith**.
- Mention hunger as the common trigger — it is textually supported in both stories.
- The key contrast is *instinctive/physical* faith (seagull) vs. *conscious/spiritual* faith (Lencho) — this earns the analytical marks.
- Keep your conclusion on faith concise but purposeful; it carries the final 1–2 marks.

Q4.

[3]

Describe the young seagull's first flight. (Two stories about flying)

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q8 (b)

◆ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

The young seagull was alone on his ledge, too afraid to fly. He feared that his wings would not support him over the vast sea below. Maddened by hunger, when his mother flew towards him with a piece of fish but stopped just short, he dived at it. With a loud scream he fell outwards into space. In that moment of terror, his wings spread and caught the wind. He soared, then flapped and rose upwards. He joined his family, flying and diving freely, finally landing on the sea — completing his first flight.

Source: *His First Flight*, Chapter 3

Explanation

- The examiner wants: **reason for fear** → **trigger (hunger/mother's fish)** → **the actual flight** → **landing**. All four stages must appear.
- Key phrases to include: "wings would not support him," "dived at the fish," "wings spread outwards," "soaring." These show you have read the text closely.
- Avoid copying long sentences verbatim; paraphrase to show understanding. 3 marks = roughly 3 clear points, so one sentence per point works well.

Q5.

[3]

Briefly bring out the contrast between the young seagull's initial attempts to fly and his first successful flight. (His First Flight)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q8 (ii)

◆ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

Initial Attempts: The young seagull was gripped by fear and could not bring himself to fly. When he ran to the brink of the ledge and tried to flap his wings, the vast expanse of the sea below terrified him. He felt certain his wings would not support him and ran back to safety. Even his parents' scolding, threats, and cajoling failed to make him move.

First Successful Flight: Maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish his mother held. He fell outwards, but instinctively his wings spread and caught the wind. Terror gave way to exhilaration as he soared, flapped, and curved freely — completely forgetting he had ever been afraid to fly.

Source: His First Flight, Chapter 3

Explanation

- The question asks for a **contrast**, so examiners expect two clearly distinct parts: failure/fear vs. success/confidence.
- Key contrast points: **paralysing fear** → **instinctive action**; **deliberate attempt** → **accidental trigger (hunger)**; **retreating from brink** → **soaring freely**.
- Avoid retelling the full story — pick only the sharpest contrasting details.
- Quoting or paraphrasing the text ("maddened by hunger," "wings spread outwards") earns credit for textual reference.

Q6.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words : Self-doubt and fear often act as barriers to success. On the other hand, curiosity leads to learning new things. Justify the statement citing instances from 'His First Flight' and 'Madam Rides the Bus'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q10(a)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

From 'His First Flight': The young seagull was gripped by self-doubt and fear. He was convinced that his wings would not support him, so he refused to fly while his siblings had already flown. His family tried threatening and cajoling him, but fear held him back. However, hunger and curiosity about the food his mother held overcame his fear. The sight of the fish maddened him, and when he dived toward it, he instinctively spread his wings and soared — conquering his barrier through a single act of desperate curiosity.

From 'Madam Rides the Bus': Valli's curiosity about the bus that passed her street drove her to learn everything — fare, distance, timing — through careful observation and discreet questions. Rather than letting fear or her young age stop her, her curiosity turned into a plan, and she successfully made the journey alone. Her desire to experience something new led to a learning experience beyond her expectation.

Thus, both stories prove that self-doubt limits us while curiosity empowers us.

Source: Chapter 3 (*His First Flight*); Chapter 7 (*Madam Rides the Bus*)

Explanation

- Examiners expect **equal coverage** of both texts — roughly half the answer for each story.
- Cite **specific instances**: the seagull's refusal → hunger/curiosity → first flight; Valli's careful information-gathering → solo bus ride.
- The question asks you to **justify a statement**, so end with a concluding line linking both stories to the theme.
- Avoid retelling the whole plot — pick only the moments that directly illustrate fear/self-doubt OR curiosity.

Q7.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions in 100–120 words:

You have been asked to present an evaluation of the approaches of both, the Baby Seagull and the Pilot who was lost in the clouds, towards achieving their dreams of conquering the skies. Write this presentation draft including your insights, comparing the approaches of both.

You may begin this way: One acknowledges that both, the Seagull and the Pilot, wanted to however,

(Reference: Two Stories About Flying)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q10(a)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

One acknowledges that both the Seagull and the Pilot wanted to conquer the skies; however, their approaches and challenges were quite different.

The young seagull faced a psychological barrier — fear of his first flight. Despite having wings, he lacked the confidence to leap. His family's encouragement, threats, and ultimately the lure of food compelled him to finally fly. His success came through instinct awakened by necessity and external motivation.

The Pilot, on the other hand, was already an experienced flyer, lost in dangerous storm clouds. His challenge was not fear but survival and navigation. A mysterious aircraft appeared and guided him safely to the airfield — suggesting that help, whether real or imagined, can rescue us in critical moments.

In evaluation, the Seagull conquered inner fear through encouragement, while the Pilot conquered external danger through trust and guidance. Both ultimately succeeded, proving that perseverance and support are key to achieving one's dreams of flight.

Source: *Two Stories About Flying*, Chapter 3

Explanation

The examiner looks for:

- A **comparative structure** addressing both characters clearly.
- Insight into the **Seagull's inner fear** vs. the **Pilot's external challenge**.
- A brief **evaluative conclusion** tying both together thematically (the "conquering the skies" idea).
- Use of the given opening line prompt naturally.
- Keep it within 120–150 words — don't over-explain either story; stay comparative and analytical.

Q8.

[3]

The young seagull's fear of flying and reluctance to leave his ledge contribute to the development of the theme of independence and courage in the story. Justify.

(Two Stories about Flying)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/3/1 Q8 (i)

◆ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

In *His First Flight*, the young seagull's fear clearly establishes the theme of independence and courage. Despite his wings being longer than his siblings', he was too afraid to fly, dreading the vast expanse of sea below. His family's encouragement, threats, and taunting failed to move him. Only hunger — when he dived desperately for the fish his mother held out — forced him to take the plunge. The moment he spread his wings, fear vanished and he soared freely, showing that courage is achieved by confronting one's fears, and independence is earned through action, not comfort.

Source: *His First Flight*, *Two Stories about Flying*, Chapter 3

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to **connect the seagull's fear to the theme** — don't just retell the story.
- Key points to hit: (1) the seagull's reluctance/fear, (2) the family's role (threats + encouragement), (3) the trigger (hunger/mother's fish), (4) the moment of overcoming fear = theme of courage and independence.
- Avoid padding. 3 marks = roughly 3 distinct, well-linked points.
- End with a thematic statement — examiners reward students who explicitly name the theme.

Q9.

[3]

"He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards, he was no longer afraid." Describe the young seagull's feelings, emotions and experiences, just before this moment. (Two Stories about Flying)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (iv)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

Just before this moment, the young seagull was desperate with hunger — he hadn't eaten since the previous nightfall. When his mother tempted him by flying across with a piece of fish, he was overcome by hunger and dived at it without thinking. The moment he leapt off the ledge, a **monstrous terror** seized him and his heart stood still. He screamed loudly as he fell outward and downward into open space. It was only when the wind rushed against his breast feathers and stomach, and he felt his wings spread outward naturally, that his terror gave way to freedom and confidence.

Source: *Two Stories about Flying, His First Flight*

Explanation

- The question asks specifically about feelings, emotions, and experiences **just before** soaring — so focus on hunger, the temptation of fish, the desperate dive, and the terror of falling.
- Three marks = three clear points: (1) extreme hunger/desperation, (2) diving at the fish/leaping off, (3) monstrous terror as he fell.
- Avoid retelling the whole story from the beginning; stay close to the moments immediately preceding the quoted line.
- Quoting "monstrous terror" shows examiner you've read closely — examiners reward textual evidence.

Q10.

[3]

How does "The Ball Poem" by John Berryman explore the theme of loss and its profound impact on an individual's emotional state and perception of the world?

(The Ball Poem)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

In "The Ball Poem," John Berryman explores loss through a young boy who loses his ball. The boy's grief symbolises how loss is an inevitable part of life that everyone must face alone. The poet observes that no one can restore what is lost — the ball is gone forever. Through this simple incident, Berryman conveys that loss teaches responsibility and forces individuals to understand that material and emotional attachments are transient, fundamentally changing one's perception of the world.

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to connect the **symbol** (ball = loss/childhood) to the **theme** (learning to cope with loss).
- Mention: the boy's emotional grief, the inevitability of loss, and the idea that one must learn to accept it — these are the three scoring points for 3 marks.
- Avoid retelling the poem line by line; focus on the **theme and its impact**.
- Note: The source passages provided did not include "The Ball Poem," so this answer is based on NCERT Class 10 textbook knowledge of the poem.

Q11.

[3]

Bring out the literal and metaphorical meaning of the word "plunge" with reference to the young seagull who failed to muster up the courage to the plunge. (Stories About Flying)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

Literal meaning: "Plunge" literally means to dive or jump downward. The young seagull stood at the brink of the ledge, looking at the vast expanse of sea stretching miles below. Taking the plunge meant physically launching himself off the cliff edge into empty air — a terrifying free fall.

Metaphorical meaning: Metaphorically, "plunge" represents confronting one's fears and taking a decisive first step into the unknown. The seagull's inability to plunge symbolises how self-doubt and fear of failure paralyse us, even when we have the ability to succeed. His eventual flight shows that courage overcomes hesitation.

Source: His First Flight, Chapter 3

Explanation

- Examiners expect **both** meanings clearly separated and labelled — award 1–1.5 marks each.
- Link the metaphorical meaning back to the text (his fear, his wings being capable, his siblings flying away) — don't make it purely abstract.
- The phrase "appeared to him so desperate" from the passage is key evidence that the fear was psychological, not physical — worth mentioning briefly.
- Keep each part about 2–3 sentences; no need to retell the whole story.

Q12.

[3]

Flying is a natural act in birds. Then why was the young seagull 'exhausted by the strange exercise'? Justify the given statement with reference to baby seagull's fear. (His First Flight)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/3/1 Q8 (v)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

Flying is natural for birds, but it still requires **first-time effort and muscle use** that the seagull had never experienced before. The young seagull had spent his entire life on the ledge, paralysed by fear. He believed his wings would never support him over the vast, terrifying expanse of the sea far below.

When he finally dived for the fish out of maddening hunger, his wings spread instinctively — but his body was completely unused to the physical strain. Having never flown before, his wing muscles were untrained. Combined with being **weak and tired from hunger**, the unfamiliar exertion of flapping and soaring left him completely exhausted by the time he landed on the sea.

Thus, fear delayed his flight, and the resulting inexperience made the exercise physically draining.

Source: *His First Flight*, Chapter 3

Explanation

- The examiner expects **two linked ideas**: (1) the seagull's fear kept him from flying, so he had no practice, and (2) the first actual flight used muscles he had never exercised, exhausting him further due to hunger.
- Quote or closely paraphrase the text: "*he was tired and weak with hunger...exhausted by the strange exercise.*"
- Do **not** write about the story beyond what's needed — stick to fear + inexperience + physical exhaustion as the three threads.
- "Strange exercise" is the key phrase — examiners want you to explain *why* it was "strange" (because it was his *first* time using those muscles).

Q13.

[3]

Every creature possesses a unique characteristic that defines it, and this trait is closely linked to its nature. This concept is beautifully illustrated in the poem "How to Tell Wild Animals." Elucidate.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/4/1 Q8 I

♦ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

In the poem "How to Tell Wild Animals," each animal is identified by its unique, defining characteristic linked to its very nature. The Bengal tiger is known for its ferocious attack; the bear hugs its victim to death. The leopard springs on prey, the crocodile weeps while devouring, and the chameleon changes colour. The poet humorously shows that each creature's identity is inseparable from its instinct — its defining trait is not just a habit but the very expression of what it is.

Explanation

The question asks you to connect the theme of "unique characteristics linked to nature" to the poem. Focus on 2–3 animal examples with their defining traits and conclude with the central idea. Examiners expect textual references to specific animals and a brief thematic statement. Avoid listing all animals — be selective and crisp within the word limit.

Q14.

[6]

Motivation plays an important role in taking risks in life and in succeeding. Do you agree ? Discuss with reference to the pilot of the old Dakota and the young seagull.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q10(a)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

Yes, motivation plays a crucial role in taking risks and achieving success, as shown by both the young seagull and the pilot of the old Dakota.

The Young Seagull: The seagull was paralysed by fear and refused to fly despite his family's encouragement. His mother strategically motivated him by holding a piece of fish just out of his reach. Maddened by hunger, he dived for it and instinctively spread his wings. Once airborne, he forgot his fear entirely and soared confidently. His motivation — hunger — overcame his greatest obstacle: his own hesitation.

The Pilot: Flying an old Dakota into storm clouds was a huge risk. Yet the pilot was motivated by his desire to reach home for Christmas. He took the risk saying "I'll take the risk," and was guided safely through the storm by a mysterious black aeroplane.

Both examples prove that strong motivation — whether hunger, desire, or longing — gives individuals the courage to face fear, take risks, and ultimately succeed.

Source: *First Flight*, Chapter 3 — "*His First Flight*" and "*The Black Aeroplane*"

Explanation

- Examiners look for **textual evidence** from **both** stories — don't write about only one.
- Quote or closely paraphrase: "*maddened by hunger*," "*I'll take the risk*" — these show you know the text.
- Structure matters: brief intro → point on seagull with evidence → point on pilot with evidence → conclusion linking to the theme.
- Avoid padding with vague general statements about motivation; keep it grounded in the stories.
- 120–150 words is the target; going beyond wastes time in the exam.

Q15.

[3]

Family played a vital role in the first flight of the young seagull. Give examples to substantiate the above statement.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q8 (a)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

The family played a crucial role in encouraging the young seagull to take his first flight:

1. **Threatening and scolding:** His parents called to him shrilly, upbraided him, and threatened to let him starve on the ledge unless he flew away.
1. **Teaching siblings:** His parents taught his brothers and sister to skim waves and dive for fish in full view of the seagull, making him feel left out and taunting him with his cowardice.
1. **The mother's trick:** His mother flew towards him with a piece of fish but halted just out of reach. Maddened by hunger, he dived at the food and instinctively spread his wings — making his first flight.
1. **Celebration:** When he finally landed on the sea, his entire family screamed with praise and offered him scraps of fish.

Source: *His First Flight*, Chapter 3

Explanation

The examiner expects **three clear points** for 3 marks. Focus on: (1) threats/scolding, (2) teaching siblings as motivation/taunt, and (3) the mother's deliberate trick with food. The celebration at the end is a bonus point. Avoid long narration — use crisp examples directly from the text. Label or bullet your points for clarity; it helps the examiner award marks easily.

Q16.

[5]

If strolling forth, a beast you view,
Whose hide with spots is peppered,
As soon as he has leapt on you,
You'll know it's the leopard.
'Twill do no good to roar with pain,
He'll only lep and lep again.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option :

- (i) One can find out that it is a leopard by the way it _____. [1]
 (a) leaps
 (b) eats
 (c) looks
 (d) roars
- (ii) State whether the following statement is true or false : When an animal repeatedly leaps at a person, it is a leopard. [1]
- (iii) Complete the sentence appropriately : It is clear that repetition is a poetic device used for 'lep and lep again' because _____. (Clue : explain how repetition is applied here.) [1]
- (iv) The Royal Bengal Tiger has black stripes on yellow skin whereas a leopard has _____. [1]
- (v) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract : claws : nails :: ? : skin [1]

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q7(a)

♦ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

- (i) (a) leaps
- (ii) True. The extract states "He'll only lep and lep again," meaning a leopard repeatedly leaps at a person.
- (iii) It is clear that repetition is used in 'lep and lep again' because the word 'lep' (leap) is repeated twice in the same line to emphasise that the leopard keeps leaping continuously without stopping.
- (iv) A leopard has black spots peppered on its hide (skin), as stated in the extract: "Whose hide with spots is peppered."
- (v) claws : nails :: **hide** : skin
(hide is the word from the extract meaning the skin/outer covering of an animal)
-

Explanation

- (i) The leopard is identified by the way it **leaps** onto you — the extract says "as soon as he has leapt on you, you'll know it's the leopard."
- (ii) Straightforward True/False — the last line directly supports it.
- (iii) For a 1-mark answer on poetic devices, name the device and briefly explain how it applies — don't over-explain.
- (iv) The extract uses the word "hide" and "spots" — use both in your answer for full credit.
- (v) The analogy tests synonyms: claws = nails (both mean sharp tips of fingers/toes); so **hide** = skin (both mean outer covering). The word "hide" appears directly in the extract.

Q17.

[3]

Analyze how Wells employs humour, rhyme, and exaggerated traits to not only entertain, but also educate readers about various wild animals. Explain.

(How to Tell Wild Animals)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q8 (iv)

◆ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

In *How to Tell Wild Animals*, Carolyn Wells uses humour, rhyme, and exaggeration to make learning about wild animals entertaining and memorable. She describes dangerous animals like the Asian Lion and Bengal Tiger in a lighthearted, comic tone — suggesting one can identify them by being mauled or eaten. The strict ABCB rhyme scheme makes the poem fun and easy to remember. Exaggerated traits, such as the bear hugging you "very, very hard," make descriptions vivid while subtly teaching readers to identify each animal by its distinctive behaviour or appearance.

Source: *How to Tell Wild Animals, First Flight — Chapter 2*

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to link **all three techniques** — humour, rhyme, and exaggeration — to specific examples from the poem.
- Key point: the humour works through *dark irony* (you identify the animal as it attacks you), which is both funny and educational.
- Mention the **dual purpose**: entertainment + education (the question specifically asks for both).
- Note: The source passages provided did not cover this poem, so the answer is grounded in textbook knowledge of the poem itself. Always cite the correct chapter.

Q18.

[3]

What lesson does the poet convey about nature in 'How to Tell Wild Animals'?

Previously asked in: 2026 2/5/1 Q8 (i)

◆ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

In '*How to Tell Wild Animals*', the poet conveys that nature, though beautiful, can be dangerous and unpredictable. She uses humour to show that wild animals are best identified by the harm they can cause — a lion mauls you, a bear hugs you to death. The underlying lesson is that humans should admire wild animals from a safe distance and respect their power. Nature's creatures are fascinating but must not be taken lightly, as they belong to the wild and follow their natural instincts.

Explanation

Since no direct source passage for this poem is provided, answer from general textbook knowledge. Examiners look for: (1) the humorous tone and its ironic message, (2) the central idea that wild animals are dangerous, and (3) a concluding point about respecting nature. Avoid retelling the poem stanza by stanza — focus on the *lesson/theme* as asked. Three marks = three clear points in a short paragraph.

Q19.

[6]

How does the method of the seagull's mother to teach her child to be independent contrast with Amanda's mother's constant nagging? Examine how this affects the emotional responses of the seagull and Amanda. ('Two Stories about Flying' and 'Amanda!')

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q10(a)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

3.1 His First Flight

4.1 Amanda!

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Model Answer

Method of Teaching — Contrast:

The seagull's mother uses a strategic, loving method to make her young one fly. She withholds food, ignores his cries, and then tempts him with fish just out of reach — forcing him to dive instinctively. Her tough love is purposeful: she knows he *can* fly and engineers the moment.

Amanda's mother, in contrast, constantly nags her — stop slouching, don't eat chocolate, don't bite nails, don't hunch. She imposes rules without understanding Amanda's emotional need for freedom and imagination.

Effect on Emotional Responses:

The seagull's fear transforms into exhilaration and triumph. Once he dives, terror gives way to joy — he soars, joins his family, and "completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly." The experience builds confidence.

Amanda, however, retreats into fantasy — she imagines herself a mermaid, an orphan roaming freely, Rapunzel in a tower. The constant nagging makes her sulky and withdrawn, escaping mentally because she cannot escape physically.

Conclusion: The seagull's mother trusts nature and guides through action; Amanda's mother controls through words — one builds independence, the other stifles it.

Source: Chapter 3 — *His First Flight*; *Amanda! (First Flight, Class X)*

Explanation

- Examiners look for a **clear contrast** between the two methods, not just a summary of both texts.
- Mention **specific evidence**: the mother halting with fish just out of reach (seagull) vs. repeated instructions about posture/chocolate/nails (Amanda).
- Show the **emotional outcome** for each child — confidence/joy vs. withdrawal/fantasy.
- A brief concluding line tying both together scores the final mark.
- Avoid retelling the full story; focus on the comparison the question asks for.

Q20.

[5]

Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black. It was impossible to see anything outside the aeroplane. The old aeroplane jumped and twisted in the air. I looked at the compass. I couldn't believe my eyes the compass was turning round and round and round. It was dead. It would not work. The other instruments were suddenly dead, too. I tried the radio. "Paris Control? Paris Control ? Can you hear me?" There was no answer. The radio was dead too. I had no radio, no compass, and I could not see where I was. I was lost in the storm.

Read the extract given below and attempt the questions that follow :

- (i) As soon as the pilot was inside the cloud..... [1]
 (a) his ears got blocked.
 (b) he choked with fear.
 (c) his vision was obstructed.
 (d) he was jumping up and down.
- (ii) The devices in the aeroplane were [1]
 (a) malfunctioning.
 (b) broken completely.
 (c) giving wrong readings.
 (d) stopped responding completely.
- (iii) The Paris air control did not reply to the pilot's call because [1]
- (iv) Select the option that correctly captures the application of the word 'twisted' as used in the extract. [1]
 (a) Ragini twisted Raghav's wrist.
 (b) Ragini twisted the story to suit the occasion.
 (c) Ragini did not appreciate Raghav's twisted bent of mind.
 (d) Ragini matched the swimmer as he twisted twice in the air before diving into the water.
- (v) Fill in the blank with ONE WORD only : The narrator's comes through clearly when he sees the compass turning round and round. [1]

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q6(A)

♦ 3.2 Black Aeroplane

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Model Answer

- (i) (c) his vision was obstructed.
 (ii) (d) stopped responding completely.
 (iii) The Paris air control did not reply because the radio in the pilot's aeroplane had stopped working completely — it was dead. Therefore, his distress call could not be received or answered.
 (iv) (d) Ragini watched the swimmer as he twisted twice in the air before diving into the water.
 (v) The narrator's **disbelief/shock** comes through clearly when he sees the compass turning round and round.

Source: *Two Stories about Flying — The Black Aeroplane*

Explanation

- (i) The extract says "everything was suddenly black" and "it was impossible to see anything" — vision was blocked, not hearing or choking.
- (ii) The instruments did not malfunction or give wrong readings — they went completely dead (stopped responding entirely), so (d) is correct.

- **(iii)** This is a 1-mark short-answer: one clear reason is enough — the radio was dead on the pilot's end, so no signal could reach Paris Control.
- **(iv)** "Twisted" here means a physical turning/rotating movement in the air — option (d) matches this literal, physical sense exactly.
- **(v)** The phrase "I couldn't believe my eyes" signals **disbelief** or **shock** — either word is acceptable to examiners.

Q21.

[5]

And no one buys a ball back, Money is external
He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes
The epistemology of loss, how to standup.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) When the poet says that "no one buys a ball back", what does he refer to in the context of the poem? [1]
- (ii) Complete the sentence with an appropriate option: The lines from the poem tell us that the boy is experiencing _____. [1]
- (A) distress
(B) terror
(C) realisation
(D) elation
- (iii) What is the significance of the term "desperate" used to describe the boy's eyes in the poem, and how does it contribute to the overall mood and tone of the poem? [2]
- (iv) Identify and discuss the poet's use of metaphor in the poem "The Ball Poem". [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/3/1 Q7(b)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

- (i) The poet refers to the fact that material losses in life, like the lost ball, cannot be undone or replaced. Money can buy a new ball but cannot restore what was lost — just as certain losses in life are permanent and irreversible.
- (ii) (C) realisation
- (iii) The word "desperate" highlights the boy's intense grief and helplessness after losing his ball. His eyes reflect deep emotional pain. This contributes to the poem's overall tone of sorrow and helplessness, creating a melancholic mood as the boy confronts loss for the first time.
- (iv) The ball itself is a metaphor for all the precious things people lose in life. Just as the ball rolls away into the water, childhood, innocence, and loved ones also slip away, teaching humans the irreversible nature of loss.

Source: *The Ball Poem, First Flight — Chapter 7*

Explanation

- (i) Focus on the idea that money is "external" — it can replace objects but not the emotional value or the experience of loss.
- (ii) "Realisation" is correct because the boy is *learning* — an intellectual and emotional awakening — not mere terror or distress.
- (iii) For 2 marks, cover **two aspects**: what "desperate" shows about the boy, AND how it affects the poem's mood/tone.
- (iv) Always name the metaphor clearly (ball = life's losses) and briefly explain the comparison. One well-explained metaphor is enough for 1 mark.

Q22.

[5]

The true Chameleon is small
A lizard sort of thing;
He hasn't any ears at all,
And not a single wing,
If there is nothing on the tree,
'Tis the Chameleon you see.

Read the given extract and answer the questions:

- (i) Fill in the blank with one word: When the speaker says "If there is nothing on the tree, 'Tis the Chameleon you see", he refers to _____ as characteristic trait of a true Chameleon. [1]
- (ii) What does the speaker mean when he says, "A lizard sort of thing"? [1]
- (iii) Which of the following best describes the speaker's disposition while describing the Chameleon? [1]
- (A) indifferent
(B) playful
(C) dismissive
(D) respectful
- (iv) Comment on the poet's use of language in these lines. Answer in about 40 words. [2]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q7(a)

♦ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

(i) Camouflage

(ii) The speaker means that the Chameleon resembles a lizard in appearance — small, scaly, and reptilian — but is not exactly a lizard. The phrase is informal, suggesting it belongs to the lizard family.

(iii) (B) playful

(iv) The poet uses simple, conversational language with a touch of humour. The informal phrase "a lizard sort of thing" creates a light-hearted tone. The use of negatives — "no ears," "not a single wing" — humorously highlights what the Chameleon lacks. The rhyme scheme (small/all, thing/wing, tree/see) gives the stanza a sing-song quality, making it lively and enjoyable.

Source: *How To Tell Wild Animals*, stanza on the Chameleon

Explanation

- (i) "Camouflage" is the one-word answer expected — the Chameleon blends with the tree so well it appears invisible.
- (ii) 1-mark answer needs one clear sentence explaining the simile/comparison.
- (iii) The overall tone of the poem is comic and light-hearted — "playful" is the best fit.
- (iv) For 2 marks, examiners look for: identification of language features (informal diction, negatives, rhyme/rhythm) + their effect. ~40 words is sufficient; do not over-write.

Q23.

[5]

No use to say 'O there are other balls
An ultimate shaking grief fixes the boy
As he stands rigid, trembling, staring down
All his young days into the harbour where his ball went.

I would not intrude on him,
A dime, another ball, is worthless. Now
He senses first responsibility
In a world of possessions. People will take
Balls, balls will be lost always, little boy
And no one buys a ball back. Money is external
He is learning.....

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Which of the following best describes the speaker's attitude towards the boy's reaction to losing his ball? [1]
- (A) indifferent as the ball is inexpensive
(B) sympathetic, understanding the depth of the boy's loss
(C) mocking, finding the boy's reaction exaggerated and unnecessary.
(D) panicked, sharing the boy's distress over the lost ball.
- (ii) Comment on the use of metaphor in the above extract. [1]
- (iii) Explain the phrase 'all his young days into the harbour' with reference to the extract. [1]
- (iv) Briefly state in about 40 words the boy's journey from 'shaking grief' to 'he is learning' in the above extract. [2]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/1/1 Q7(B)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

(i) (B) sympathetic, understanding the depth of the boy's loss.

(ii) The phrase "**all his young days into the harbour**" is a metaphor. The boy's entire childhood — his memories and experiences — is compared to something that has sunk into the harbour along with the ball, suggesting a deep, irreversible loss.

(iii) The phrase means the boy is not just staring at the water; he is mentally gazing back at all the happy moments of his childhood that the ball represented. Its loss feels like losing a part of his past forever.

(iv) The boy is initially overcome by "ultimate shaking grief" — he stands rigid and trembling at the loss of his ball. Gradually, through this pain, he begins to understand that loss is inevitable in life. He realises money cannot replace what is truly precious, and this marks his first lesson in responsibility and accepting loss — **he is learning**.

Source: *The Ball Poem*, John Berryman

Explanation

- (i) The speaker explicitly says "I would not intrude" and calls a replacement ball "worthless," showing empathy, not indifference or mockery.

- **(ii)** For metaphor questions, name the metaphor, identify the two things compared, and state the effect. Don't just define metaphor.
- **(iii)** Focus on the emotional/symbolic meaning — the harbour represents irreversible loss of childhood.
- **(iv)** This is a 2-mark question requiring ~40 words. Show the *journey*: grief → realisation → learning. Examiners look for both endpoints and the transition between them.

Q24.

[5]

That was twenty-four hours ago. Since then nobody had come near him. The day before, all day long, he had watched his parents flying about with his brothers and sister, perfecting them in the art of flight, teaching them how to skim the waves and how to dive for fish. He had, in fact, seen his elder brother catch his first herring and devour it, standing on a rock, while his parents circled around raising a proud cackle and all the morning the whole family had walked about on the big plateau midway down the opposite cliff taunting him for his cowardice.

Read the given extract and answer the questions.

- (i) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket : The use of the phrase 'proud cackle' adds to a sense of _____ (noise/pride) in the extract. [1]
- (ii) How do the parents teach their young to be independent ? [1]
- (iii) Describe the contrasting reactions of the parents to their children giving reasons. [2]
- (iv) The word 'devour' in the above extract most nearly means [1]
- (A) scared
(B) gobbled
(C) preserved
(D) cooled

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q6(a)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

- (i) The use of the phrase 'proud cackle' adds to a sense of **pride** in the extract.
- (ii) The parents teach their young to be independent by flying about with them, perfecting them in the art of flight, and teaching them how to skim the waves and dive for fish.
- (iii) Towards the young ones who flew, the parents were proud and encouraging — they circled around raising a proud cackle when the elder brother caught his first herring. However, towards the young seagull who refused to fly, the entire family was scornful and taunting, mocking him for his cowardice. This contrast shows that the parents celebrated courage and achievement while using ridicule to push the hesitant one into action.
- (iv) **(B) gobbled**

Source: *His First Flight, Extract*

Explanation

- (i) 'Proud cackle' clearly conveys the parents' pride, not mere noise — so 'pride' is correct.
- (ii) Pull the answer directly from the extract: "perfecting them in the art of flight, teaching them how to skim the waves and how to dive for fish."
- (iii) For 2 marks, you must show **both** sides of the contrast with reasons — proud/encouraging vs. taunting/scornful. One side alone fetches only 1 mark.
- (iv) 'Devour' means to eat greedily/rapidly — 'gobbled' is the closest synonym. Memorise this as a vocabulary word from the lesson.

Q25.

[6]

Answer in about 100-120 words: Explore the theme of loss as it is depicted in both the "Ball Poem" and "The Sermon at Benaras", highlighting the inevitable nature of this aspect in life?

Previously asked in: 2025 2/4/1 Q10.I

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

Theme of Loss in "The Ball Poem" and "The Sermon at Benaras"

In "The Ball Poem," a young boy loses his ball in the water. The poet uses this small loss to convey a deeper truth — loss is an inevitable part of life, and one must learn to accept it. The boy's grief is real, yet it teaches him that material things cannot be retrieved, and he must take responsibility for his losses.

In "The Sermon at Benaras," Kisa Gotami loses her son and is overwhelmed with grief. The Buddha sends her to fetch mustard seeds from a house where no one has died. Through this, she realizes that death and loss visit every home — no family is untouched.

Both poems share the central idea that loss is universal and inescapable. Whether it is a child's ball or a mother's son, grief is part of the human condition, and acceptance is the only path forward.

Explanation

- Examiners look for **parallel treatment** of both texts — don't spend 80% on one.
- Key phrase to use: **"loss is universal/inevitable"** — this directly answers the theme question.
- In "Ball Poem": ball = symbol of loss; boy = learning to cope independently.
- In "Sermon at Benaras": mustard seed errand = Buddha's method to show universality of death.
- Conclude by **linking both** — the thematic connection earns the final mark.

Q26.

[5]

What is the boy now, who has lost his ball,
What, what is he to do ? I saw it go
Merrily bouncing, down the street and then
Merrily over — there it is in the water !

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

- (i) What does the repetition of 'What, what' denote? [1]
(a) loss of the ball
(b) ask the poet for another ball
(c) boy's grief over the loss of the ball
(d) go down the street
- (ii) State whether the following statement is True or False: The poet was delighted to watch the ball bouncing down the street into the water. [1]
- (iii) The poet repeats the word 'Merrily' in order to _____. [1]
- (iv) The phrase 'I saw it go' indicates that the poet feels that it would be _____ to console the boy. [1]
(a) helpful
(b) futile
(c) easy
(d) shameful
- (v) The boy has lost his ball. Which feeling is expressed in this line? [1]
(a) regret
(b) cheer
(c) despair
(d) thrill

Previously asked in: 2023 2/5/1 Q7(A)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

- (i) (c) boy's grief over the loss of the ball
- (ii) False. The poet was not delighted; he watched the ball go sadly, aware of the boy's loss and helplessness.
- (iii) The poet repeats 'Merrily' to contrast the carefree, joyful movement of the ball with the deep sadness and helplessness felt by the boy who has lost it.
- (iv) (b) futile
- (v) (c) despair

Source: *The Ball Poem*, First Flight (Class 10)

Explanation

- (i) The repetition of 'What, what' mimics a stunned, grieving mind — it shows the boy is overwhelmed with sorrow, not just confusion.
- (ii) The poet's tone is empathetic and sad, not delighted; 'I saw it go' shows helpless witnessing, not joy.

- (iii) 'Merrily' for a fill-in-the-blank needs a reason — always link the ball's cheerful bouncing to the ironic contrast with the boy's grief. This contrast is the poetic device the examiner wants noted.
- (iv) 'I saw it go' means the poet witnessed the loss himself and understands it is irreversible — hence consoling would be futile.
- (v) Losing something precious causes despair (deep hopelessness), not regret (which is milder) or the others.

Q27.

[3]

What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it? (The Black Aeroplane)

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q8 (c)

◆ 3.2 Black Aeroplane

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Model Answer

The Risk: The narrator was flying his old Dakota aeroplane over France when he saw huge black storm clouds ahead. The risk was flying straight into the dark storm clouds instead of turning back or going around them.

Why he took it: He was eager to reach England and have a traditional English breakfast with his family. He was already late and did not want to miss his holiday. So, despite the danger, he decided to fly directly into the storm clouds, saying "I'll take the risk."

Source: *The Black Aeroplane*, Chapter 3

Explanation

- Examiners expect **two clear parts**: (1) what the risk is, and (2) the reason for taking it. Missing either part costs marks.
- The risk = flying into the storm clouds; the reason = desire to reach home/family + excitement about the holiday breakfast. Both must be stated.
- Keep the answer factual and text-based — no speculation about the mysterious plane here.

Q28.

[5]

Or if some time when roaming round,
A noble wild beast greets you,
With black stripes on a yellow ground,
Just notice if he eats you.
This simple rule may help you learn
The Bengal Tiger to discern.

Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:

(i) The poem helps to identify a [1]

- (a) zebra
- (b) Asian Tiger
- (c) Asian Lion
- (d) Bengal Tiger

(ii) Complete the sentence appropriately. It is clear that alliteration is the poetic device used for 'roaming round' because _____. (Clue: explain how alliteration applies here) [1]

(iii) State whether the following statement is True or False: The extract helps to identify a Royal Bengal Tiger. [1]

(iv) In the given lines, what effect does the poet create? 'Just notice if he eats you. This simple rule may help you learn The Bengal Tiger to discern.' [1]

- (a) irony
- (b) terror
- (c) sympathy
- (d) criticism

(v) Which word in the extract tells you that you have recognised the animal? [1]

- (a) rule
- (b) discern
- (c) roaming
- (d) notice

Previously asked in: 2023 2/2/1 Q7(A)

◆ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

(i) (d) Bengal Tiger

(ii) It is clear that alliteration is the poetic device used for 'roaming round' because both words begin with the same consonant sound 'r', which is the defining feature of alliteration.

(iii) True — The extract helps to identify a Royal Bengal Tiger, as the poem describes an animal with black stripes on a yellow ground, which is the Bengal Tiger.

(iv) (a) irony

(v) (b) discern

Source: "How to Tell Wild Animals," extract stanza

Explanation

- (i) The stanza explicitly names "Bengal Tiger" in the last line.

- **(ii)** For alliteration questions, always state which **same sound/letter** repeats and that it appears at the **beginning** of consecutive/nearby words.
- **(iii)** "Bengal Tiger" and "Royal Bengal Tiger" refer to the same animal; the statement is **True**.
- **(iv)** The humour lies in the absurd suggestion of noticing "if he eats you" — you cannot survive to identify the tiger, making it **ironic**. Examiners expect 'irony' here.
- **(v)** "Discern" means to recognise or identify — it directly signals recognition of the animal. Always check vocabulary meanings for such options.

Q29.

[5]

In a world of possessions. People will take
 Balls, balls will be lost always, little boy.
 And no one buys a ball back. Money is external.
 He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
 The epistemology of loss, how to stand up
 Knowing what every man must one day know
 And most know many days, how to stand up.

Read the following extract and answer the questions:

- (i) Fill in the blank with one word. In a world of possessions, people will take balls, Balls will be lost _____. [1]
- (ii) The poet says that money is external. What inference can be drawn from this statement? Answer in about 40 words. [2]
- (iii) What is the poet's attitude towards material possessions? [1]
- A indifferent
 B emotional
 C casual
 D respectful
- (iv) What does the phrase 'epistemology of loss' mean in the context of the poem? [1]

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q7(a)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

- (i) always
- (ii) The poet means that money cannot replace emotional attachments. A new ball can be bought with money, but it cannot replace the one that was lost. Loss is deeply personal and emotional, and material wealth is unable to heal that inner pain.
- (iii) B — emotional
- (iv) 'Epistemology of loss' means the understanding or knowledge of loss — learning how to accept and cope with losing something precious, a lesson every person must face at some point in life.

Explanation

- (i) It is a direct lift from the extract: "Balls will be lost **always**."
- (ii) For 2 marks, examiners expect two clear points: (a) money is only external/material, and (b) it cannot replace emotional or personal loss.
- (iii) The poet is personally invested and emotionally engaged with the boy's pain — option B is correct. 'Indifferent' or 'casual' would contradict the poem's tone.
- (iv) 'Epistemology' means the theory/study of knowledge. In context, it refers to understanding/learning the hard truth about loss — keep this explanation brief and contextual for 1 mark.

Q30.

[5]

The moon was coming up in the east, behind me, and stars were shining in the clear sky above me. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. I was happy to be alone high up above the sleeping countryside. I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane over France back to England. I was dreaming of my holiday and looking forward to being with my family. I looked at my watch: one thirty in the morning.

Read the following extract and answer the questions:

(i) What time of the day is the above extract set in? [1]

- A dawn
- B afternoon
- C night
- D dusk

(ii) State any one inference about the writer from the given context. "I was looking forward to being with my family." [1]

(iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the brackets. The use of the phrase 'clear sky' adds to a sense of _____ (favourable/flavourful) weather conditions. [1]

(iv) How does the serene atmosphere described by the narrator contribute to the mood and anticipation of his journey back to England? Elaborate in about 40 words, with reference to the extract. [2]

Previously asked in: 2025 2/3/1 Q6(a)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

(i) C — night

(ii) The writer was away from his family, possibly on a work trip, and missed them. He was eager to return home, suggesting he is a family-oriented person.

(iii) The use of the phrase 'clear sky' adds to a sense of **favourable** weather conditions.

(iv) The narrator describes a calm, peaceful night — the moon rising, stars shining, not a cloud in the sky, and the countryside sleeping below. This serene atmosphere creates a mood of contentment and ease. He feels happy being alone in the quiet sky, and his anticipation grows as he dreams of his holiday and family reunion. The undisturbed, clear night reinforces his hopeful, relaxed state of mind, making the journey feel pleasant and promising.

Source: *Two Stories About Flying — The Black Aeroplane*

Explanation

- (i) The extract clearly states "one thirty in the morning" and mentions the moon and stars — unambiguously night.
- (ii) A 1-mark inference needs one clear, supported point. Link the quote directly to a personality trait or situation.
- (iii) "Favourable" is the correct collocate — "clear sky" signals good flying weather. "Flavourful" is meaningless in context.

- **(iv)** For 2 marks (~40 words), examiners expect you to connect the **atmosphere** (moon, stars, clear sky, sleeping countryside) to the narrator's **mood** (happy, relaxed) and **anticipation** (dreaming of family/holiday). Use evidence from the extract — don't write generally about flying.

Q31.**[6]**

In 'The Ball Poem', Berryman explores the themes of loss, growing up, and transformation. Mandela also experienced loss of freedom and suffering along with his countrymen during his growing years on the basis of his race and colour. Compare and contrast the commonality of themes in both the texts.

(The Ball Poem and Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q10(b)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer**Commonality of Themes: 'The Ball Poem' and 'Nelson Mandela – Long Walk to Freedom'****Loss:**

In *The Ball Poem*, the boy loses his ball — symbolising the irreversible loss of childhood joys. Similarly, Mandela and his countrymen experienced the loss of freedom, dignity, and basic rights due to racial oppression — "an extraordinary human disaster" as he calls it.

Growing Up:

Berryman's boy must learn to stand his "ultimate loneliness" and accept loss as part of maturing. Mandela's understanding of freedom also evolved with age — as a boy, freedom meant playing freely; as a student, it meant wider rights; as a man, it meant freedom for all South Africans.

Transformation:

The boy transforms from carefree innocence to responsibility. Mandela illustrates that "depths of oppression create heights of character" — suffering transformed ordinary men into extraordinary patriots, giving birth to leaders of courage and resilience.

Contrast:

The ball poem deals with personal, private loss, while Mandela's loss is collective and political. However, both ultimately convey that loss, though painful, leads to growth and a deeper understanding of one's responsibilities.

Source: *First Flight — Chapter 2 (Nelson Mandela); The Ball Poem*

Explanation

- Examiners look for **parallel treatment** of both texts — don't write about one poem alone.
- Structure around the **three themes** named in the question: loss, growing up, transformation — each addressed for both texts.
- Include a brief **contrast** to show analytical thinking (personal vs. collective loss).
- Use **textual evidence** (Mandela's own words, ball as symbol) to score full marks.
- Keep language crisp — padding reduces marks; precision earns them.

Q32.

[5]

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
A novice might nonplus,
The Crocodile you always may
Tell from the Hyena thus:
Hyenas come with merry smiles;
But if they weep they're Crocodiles.
The true Chameleon is small,
A lizard sort of thing;
He hasn't any ears at all,
And not a single wing.
If there is nothing on the tree,
'Tis the chameleon you see.

Read the following extract and answer the questions.

- (i) How does the poet describe the crocodile's tears? Choose the correct option: [1]
(A) genuine and heartfelt
(B) joyful and sincere
(C) false and deceptive
(D) cold and indifferent
- (ii) What confusion will a newcomer face while distinguishing between a hyena and a crocodile, as described humorously by the poet in the above extract? [1]
- (iii) Mention any two characteristics of a chameleon on the basis of the given extract. [2]
- (iv) Fill in the blank with the correct option from those given in the brackets: The tone of the poet in the above lines is _____ (playful and humorous/serious and confused). [1]

Previously asked in: 2026 2/2/1 Q7(a)

♦ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

- (i) (C) false and deceptive
- (ii) A newcomer (novice) will be confused because both the hyena and the crocodile have similar expressions — the hyena comes with a merry smile, while the crocodile weeps. The beginner may not know that the hyena's smile is its natural look and the crocodile's tears are false, making it hard to tell them apart.
- (iii) Two characteristics of a chameleon:
- It is small and lizard-like, with no ears and no wings.
 - It is so well-camouflaged that when it sits on a tree, nothing seems to be visible — "If there is nothing on the tree, 'tis the chameleon you see."
- (iv) The tone of the poet in the above lines is **playful and humorous**.

Source: "How to Tell Wild Animals," Stanza 5 & 6

Explanation

- (i) "Crocodile tears" is a well-known phrase meaning fake sadness — examiners expect students to recognise this.

- **(ii)** The humour lies in the absurdity: the only way to tell them apart is by their expressions (smile vs. weeping), which a novice would find confusing.
- **(iii)** Pull **two distinct** physical/behavioural traits directly from the lines. Both must come from the extract.
- **(iv)** The poem uses comic exaggeration and ridiculous logic throughout — this is the hallmark of a **playful and humorous** tone.

Q33.

[5]

What, what is the boy now
 who has lost his ball.
 What, what is he to do.
 I saw it go
 Merrily bouncing, down the street and then
 Merrily over – there it is
 in the water!"
 No use to say 'O there are other balls'.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions:

- (i) What does the repetition of the word "merrily" suggest in the context of the ball's movement? [1]
- (ii) How does this moment contrast the mood of the poem before and after the ball falls into the water? (Answer in about 40 words) [2]
- (iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket: The poet uses the ball as a symbol of the boy's _____. (childhood/adventure) [1]
- (iv) The line, 'No use to say, oh there are other balls' signifies: [1]
- (A) Words of consolation are inappropriate.
 (B) The boy must be left alone and play with other toys.
 (C) The boy should not be left alone.
 (D) No ball will be as expensive as the one the boy has lost.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/5/1 Q7(A)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

- (i) The repetition of "merrily" suggests that the ball bounced away cheerfully and carelessly, indifferent to the boy's loss — highlighting an ironic contrast between the ball's light movement and the boy's grief.
- (ii) Before the ball falls, the mood is lively and carefree, as the ball bounces "merrily" down the street. After it falls into the water, the mood shifts to helplessness and sorrow. The repeated "What, what" reflects the boy's shock and confusion at the irreversible loss.
- (iii) The poet uses the ball as a symbol of the boy's **childhood**.
- (iv) (A) Words of consolation are inappropriate.

Source: *The Ball Poem*, John Berryman

Explanation

- (i) Focus on the word "merrily" — its tone is joyful/carefree, which ironically contrasts with the boy's sadness. One line is enough for 1 mark.
- (ii) For 2 marks, examiners want a clear **before vs. after** contrast. Mention the carefree mood before and the grief/helplessness after. ~40 words, no padding.
- (iii) "Childhood" is correct — the ball symbolises the joys and innocence of childhood, not adventure. This is a factual recall question.

- (iv) Option A is correct. The poet's point is that no replacement can undo the emotional loss; material consolation misses the deeper meaning of what was lost.

Q34.**[3]**

Explain why time is probably one of the most valuable possessions that one intensely regrets losing. (The Ball Poem)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q8 V

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

In *The Ball Poem*, the boy loses his ball and realises he can never get it back. Time moves only forward — moments of childhood, joy, and innocence, once gone, cannot be recovered. Money can buy a new ball, but it cannot buy back the time spent playing with the old one, nor the memories attached to it. This is why time is more precious than any material possession; its loss is permanent and deeply felt.

Source: *First Flight*, Chapter — *The Ball Poem*

Explanation

The question asks you to link the poem's central idea — the boy's loss — to the broader theme of **time as irreplaceable**. Examiners look for: (1) the contrast between material loss (replaceable) and time/memory (irreplaceable), and (2) a clear statement about why this makes time the most valuable possession. Avoid retelling the whole poem; focus on the concept. Three marks = three clear points woven into a short paragraph.

Q35.

[5]

A dime, another ball, is worthless. Now
 He senses first responsibility
 In a world of possessions. People will take
 Balls, balls will be lost always, little boy.
 And no one buys a ball back. Money is external
 He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
 The epistemology of loss, how to stand up
 Knowing what every man must one day know
 And most know many days, how to stand up.

Read the given extracts and answer the questions for any ONE of the two given.

- (i) Comment on the portrayal of the character of the boy in the given extract. [2]
- (ii) Complete the following suitably : "Money is external" implies that the boy _____ [1]
- (A) values material possessions.
 (B) learns the money cannot restore what is lost.
 (C) believes money is the solution to all problems.
 (D) is indifferent to material wealth.
- (iii) What does the poet mean by the phrase, 'epistemology of loss' ? [1]
- (iv) What kind of atmosphere is created through these lines ? Select the correct option. 1. reflection 2. intrigue 3. acceptance 4. anger 5. fear [1]
- (A) 1, 4 and 5
 (B) Only 2
 (C) 1 and 3
 (D) 4 and 5

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q7 (b)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

- (i) The boy is portrayed as deeply distressed — his "desperate eyes" reveal his grief at losing the ball. He is innocent yet on the threshold of a painful realization. He is being transformed from a carefree child into someone who begins to understand responsibility and irreversible loss in a world of possessions.
- (ii) (B) learns that money cannot restore what is lost.
- (iii) 'Epistemology of loss' means the knowledge or understanding of what it means to lose something permanently. The boy is learning that loss is inevitable and that one must come to terms with it — a lesson every human being faces at some point in life.
- (iv) (C) 1 and 3 — The atmosphere is one of **reflection** (the poet meditates on loss and growing up) and **acceptance** (the boy must stand up and accept that loss is a universal truth of life).

Source: *The Ball Poem, English First Flight, Class X*

Explanation

- (i) Focus on the boy's emotional state ("desperate eyes") and what he is learning — examiners want both observation and inference.

- **(ii)** "Money is external" directly contrasts with internal/emotional value; the ball cannot be bought back, so (B) is correct.
- **(iii)** "Epistemology" means the study/theory of knowledge — here it is the knowledge *about* loss. Keep it simple and exam-relevant.
- **(iv)** The tone is thoughtful (reflective) and moving toward acceptance; there is no anger or fear — eliminate options accordingly.

Q36.**[6]**

How does the contrast between the pilot's fear in 'The Black Aeroplane' and Custard's initial cowardice in 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' highlight that courage can be found in the most unexpected characters when circumstances demand it? Discuss with reference to the two.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/2/1 Q10(b)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

3.2 Black Aeroplane

7.1 The Tale of Custard the Dragon

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Model Answer

Both 'The Black Aeroplane' and 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' explore how courage emerges unexpectedly from characters not initially associated with bravery.

In 'The Black Aeroplane', the pilot knowingly flies his old Dakota into a dangerous storm despite fear, saying "I'll take the risk." Inside the clouds, everything turned black, his compass and instruments stopped working, and he had no fuel — yet he kept his nerve. Mysteriously, another aeroplane appeared and guided him safely to a runway, showing that help and courage can come from unknown, unexpected sources.

Custard, despite being a dragon (traditionally a fierce creature), is mocked for begging for a "nice safe cage." Yet when a pirate threatens everyone, Custard alone springs into action and defeats him — proving that the character dismissed as a coward displays the truest courage when circumstances demand it.

Thus, both texts show that real courage is not about outward confidence but about rising to a challenge when it truly matters.

Source: *The Black Aeroplane* and *The Tale of Custard the Dragon*, Chapter 3

Explanation

Examiners look for:

- **Direct textual references** from both poems/stories (not vague summaries).
- A **clear thematic link** — the contrast between apparent fear/cowardice and actual courage under pressure.
- Mention of the **pilot's risk**, the storm, and the mysterious aeroplane for Story 1.
- Mention of **Custard's mocked cowardice** vs. his **decisive action against the pirate** for Poem 2.
- A **concluding line** tying both texts to the common theme — examiners reward this.
- Keep it within ~130 words; do not retell the entire plot.

Q37.

[3]

How does the line 'people will take balls, balls will be lost always', justify that material losses are necessary for emotional growth and to understand the harsh realities of life ? (The Ball Poem)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

The line "people will take balls, balls will be lost always" reflects the universal truth that material losses are inevitable in life. The boy losing his ball is his first experience of permanent loss — something money cannot restore. The poet suggests that such losses teach children to accept grief, move on, and understand the world's indifference to personal sorrow. Thus, material loss becomes the first lesson in emotional maturity and resilience, preparing one for harsher realities ahead.

Explanation

- The examiner wants you to connect the specific line to the theme of **loss as a learning experience**.
- Key ideas: inevitability of loss, no replacement for emotional attachment, the boy learning to "stand up" and cope — this is the poem's central message.
- Avoid simply paraphrasing; show the link between material loss → emotional growth → understanding life's harsh realities.
- About 70–80 words is ideal for 3 marks.

Q38.

[5]

He felt certain that his wings would never support him; so he bent his head and ran away back to the little hole under the ledge where he slept at night. Even when each of his brothers and his little sister, whose wings were far shorter than his own, ran to the brink, flapped their wings, and flew away, he failed to muster up courage to take that plunge which appeared to him so desperate. His father and mother had come around calling to him shrilly, upbraiding him, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew away. But for the life of him he could not move.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two, (a) or (b):

- (i) State any one inference about the parents of the baby seagull from the given statement. "His father and mother had come around calling to him shrilly, upbraiding him, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew away." [1]
- (ii) Where did the little seagull sleep at night? [1]
- (iii) Which factors contributed to the young seagull's reluctance to fly despite the encouragement and threats from his parents? Elaborate in about 40 words, with reference to the extract. [2]
- (iv) Which phrase or word would correctly substitute 'muster up' in the given sentence from the extract? He failed to 'muster up' courage to take that plunge which appeared to him so desperate. [1]
- (A) review
(B) resolve
(C) distribute
(D) gather

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q6 (a)

♦ 3.1 His First Flight

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Model Answer

- (i) The parents were concerned yet strict — they wanted the young seagull to fly by any means, even threatening to starve him, showing they were both caring and tough in pushing him towards independence.
- (ii) The little seagull slept at night in a little hole under the ledge.
- (iii) The young seagull was reluctant to fly due to two main reasons: first, he was convinced his wings would never support his weight in the air. Second, the act of leaping off the ledge seemed utterly desperate and terrifying to him. Even watching his siblings — with shorter wings — fly successfully could not overcome his deep-rooted fear and self-doubt.
- (iv) (D) gather

Source: *Two Stories about Flying – His First Flight*

Explanation

- (i) Any valid inference about the parents earns the mark — focus on their tone (shrill, upbraiding) and motivation (want him to fly). Don't just quote; *infer*.
- (ii) Lift the answer directly from the extract: "little hole under the ledge." One line is enough for 1 mark.
- (iii) Two factors must be identified for 2 marks: (a) belief that his wings couldn't support him, and (b) the plunge seeming desperate/frightening. Stay within the extract; ~40 words is the target.

- **(iv)** "Muster up courage" = gather courage. 'Gather' is the closest synonym. 'Resolve' is tempting but means to decide, not accumulate — 'gather' fits best as a direct substitute.

Q39.

[5]

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
 A novice might nonplus,
 The crocodile you always may
 Tell from the Hyena thus :
 Hyenas come with merry smiles
 But if they weep they're crocodiles.

Read the given extracts and answer the questions for ANY ONE of the two given:

- I** What is the most likely reason the poet uses the word 'nonplus' instead of confused? [1]
- II** Explain the irony in the last two lines of the stanza. [2]
- III** Fill in the blank with one word: The word 'novice' signifies a/an _____ person. [1]
- IV** What kind of atmosphere is created through these lines? Select the correct option: 1. humorous 2. mysterious 3. aggressive 4. confusing 5. fearful [1]
- A 1 and 4
 B Only 5
 C 1, 2 and 3
 D 4 and 5

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q7(B)

♦ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

- I.** The poet uses 'nonplus' instead of 'confused' because it rhymes with the preceding line ending in 'us', maintaining the poem's rhyme scheme. It also adds a humorous, sophisticated tone.
- II.** The irony lies in the fact that weeping is generally associated with sadness and sympathy, yet here it is a sign of danger — the crocodile weeps while attacking its prey ("crocodile tears"). A creature that smiles (hyena) is also deadly. Both expressions — smiling and weeping — are deceptive, which ironically makes neither animal trustworthy or safe.
- III.** The word 'novice' signifies an **inexperienced** person.
- IV. Option A — 1 and 4**
- The lines are humorous because the poet offers an absurd, comic "method" to distinguish dangerous animals. They are also confusing because both animals are deadly regardless of their expressions, making the advice practically useless.

Source: "How to Tell Wild Animals," Carolyn Wells

Explanation

- I:** Always check for rhyme scheme when unusual word choices appear in poetry — examiners expect this observation.
- II:** "Crocodile tears" is the key literary/cultural reference here. Stress the irony that weeping = danger, not sympathy.
- III:** 'Novice' = beginner/inexperienced — either word is acceptable.

- **IV:** The poem is clearly comic/humorous (option 1) and the advice is deliberately muddled/confusing (option 4), so A is correct.

Q40.**[3]**

'The Ball Poem' deals with the undertones of loss and responsibility. How is the poem very relatable to our lives and what important message/s do we learn from it? (The Ball Poem)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/6/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

'The Ball Poem' by John Berryman is highly relatable because everyone has experienced the loss of something dear — a toy, a pet, a person, or an opportunity. The boy's grief over his lost ball represents the universal pain of losing things we love.

The poem teaches us that:

1. **Loss is inevitable** — we cannot hold on to everything forever.
2. **We must learn to accept loss** — the boy must "stand up" and move on without being rescued.
3. **Responsibility comes with growing up** — material things can be replaced, but some losses are permanent, and we must take ownership of that reality.

Thus, the poem prepares us emotionally for the hardships of life.

Explanation

- The examiner expects you to: (1) state how the poem is relatable, (2) give at least two clear messages/lessons.
- Key phrase to use: "epistemology of loss" is the technical term the textbook uses, but simply writing "learning to cope with loss" is fine for board exams.
- Do **not** retell the poem's story — focus on its meaning and message, which is what the question asks.
- 3 marks = 1 mark for relatability + 2 marks for distinct messages. Keep answers crisp and pointwise.

Q41.

[3]

The Ball Poem initially appears simple but it is actually quite impactful and intense. Comment upon the theme of 'The Ball Poem'.

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q8 (ii)

♦ 3.4 The Ball Poem

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Model Answer

Theme of 'The Ball Poem':

'The Ball Poem' by John Berryman deals with the theme of **loss and learning to cope with it**. When a young boy loses his ball, it symbolises the first real experience of loss in life. The poet observes that material things can be replaced, but the boy must learn to accept irreplaceable losses — this is an essential lesson of growing up. The poem thus explores **responsibility and the inevitability of loss**, showing that learning to bear grief is a fundamental part of human existence.

Explanation

- The question asks you to comment on the **theme**, so focus on the central idea: loss, acceptance, and growing up.
- Key points examiners expect: (1) the ball as a symbol of loss, (2) loss being irreplaceable/inevitable, (3) the boy learning responsibility/maturity.
- Note: The source passages provided do not contain 'The Ball Poem', so this answer is based on the prescribed CBSE Class 10 poem by John Berryman. Always support your theme answer with a brief reference to what happens in the poem.

Q42.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words :

Compare the two stories, 'Letter to God' and 'The Black Aeroplane' from 'Stories About Flying'. Examine how both these stories illustrate that help can come in unexpected forms.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q10 (a)

♦ Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

Both 'Letter to God' and 'The Black Aeroplane' are stories about flying, yet they beautifully illustrate that help arrives in the most unexpected ways.

In 'Letter to God', Lencho's crops are destroyed by a hailstorm. He writes a letter to God asking for money. Unexpectedly, it is not God but the postmaster and his colleagues who collect money and send it to Lencho. The help comes from ordinary, anonymous humans — a form Lencho never anticipated.

In 'The Black Aeroplane', the pilot is lost inside a dangerous storm with no fuel and no visibility. Suddenly, a mysterious black aeroplane appears and guides him safely to the runway. When he tries to thank the pilot, the control tower confirms no other plane was in the air — the helper's identity remains unknown.

Both stories show that in moments of crisis, help comes from surprising, even mysterious sources — sometimes human, sometimes beyond explanation.

Source: First Flight, Chapter 1 (Letter to God) and Chapter 3 (The Black Aeroplane)

Explanation

- The examiner wants a **comparative** answer — discuss **both** stories and link them to the common theme of **unexpected help**.
- Mention the specific form of unexpected help in each story: anonymous humans in 'Letter to God'; a mysterious, unidentified aeroplane in 'The Black Aeroplane'.
- End with a **connecting statement** that ties both stories to the theme — this shows higher-order thinking and earns full marks.
- Keep it within 120–150 words; do not retell the entire plot — focus on the point of comparison.
- The question says "answer any **one**" of two questions — answer only this one in the exam.

Q43.

[5]

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
 A novice might nonplus,
 The crocodiles you always may
 Tell from the Hyena thus :
 Hyenas come with merry smiles;
 But if they weep they're crocodiles.

Attempt any one of the given two extracts:

- (i) Select the appropriate option to complete the sentence, according to the extract: Crocodiles can be identified by their _____. [1]
- (a) tears
 - (b) attitude
 - (c) smiles
 - (d) attacks
- (ii) State whether the following statement is True or False: Hyenas are famous for weeping. [1]
- (iii) 'Novice' in line 2 means the same as: [1]
- (a) learner
 - (b) beast
 - (c) tender foot
 - (d) beginner
- (iv) In this extract the poet has presented two different behavioural traits of animals. They are _____. [1]
- (v) The poet uses 'A novice might nonplus' instead of the novice might get confused. How does this usage impact the poem? [1]
- (a) adds an incorrect option.
 - (b) it is associated with beasts.
 - (c) it rhymes and adds humour.
 - (d) it simplifies the meaning.

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q7(a)

◆ 3.3 How to Tell Wild Animals

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Model Answer

- (i) (a) tears
- (ii) False. Hyenas are famous for their **merry smiles**, not weeping. It is crocodiles that weep.
- (iii) The correct options are **(a) learner** and **(d) beginner** — both mean the same as 'novice'. (*If only one is expected: (a) learner*)
- (iv) The two behavioural traits are: **merry smiling** (associated with Hyenas) and **weeping** (associated with Crocodiles).
- (v) (c) it rhymes and adds humour.

Source: The extract presented in the question.

Explanation

- (i) The last line clearly states "if they weep they're crocodiles" — tears identify them.

- **(ii)** The poem says "Hyenas come with merry smiles" — so weeping is False.
- **(iii)** 'Novice' means someone new/inexperienced — both 'learner' and 'beginner' qualify; examiners usually accept either.
- **(iv)** Directly lifted from lines 5–6; name both traits clearly.
- **(v)** 'Nonplus' rhymes with 'thus' (end of stanza pattern) and keeps the comic tone — the hallmark of this humorous verse.

Q44.**[6]**

Answer in 100-120 words.

Valli was sensitive, but at the same time, she was fearless and quite determined. Think of another character from your text book, who displayed similar character traits.

Compare and contrast the lives of Valli and the other character, that you have chosen from the text of Two Stories about Flying.

You may begin this way.

The characters who are fearless and determined from two texts are Valli and _____.

(Reference : Madam Rides a Bus & Two Stories about Flying)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/3/1 Q10(a)

♦ Madam Rides the Bus

Two Stories about Flying

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Model Answer

The characters who are fearless and determined from two texts are Valli and the young seagull (from *His First Flight*).

Similarities: Both Valli and the young seagull were curious and longed to experience something new — Valli desired a bus ride, while the seagull longed to fly. Both showed determination to overcome their fear and achieve their goal. Both were sensitive to their surroundings and observed everything keenly.

Differences: Valli was a real, practical child who carefully planned her journey — saving sixty paise, resisting temptations, and timing her trip precisely. The seagull, however, acted on instinct when hunger pushed him off the ledge. Valli acted independently and with full awareness; the seagull needed external motivation. Valli's journey was a conscious, deliberate adventure, while the seagull's first flight was driven by desperation.

Both ultimately triumphed through courage and determination.

Source: *Madam Rides the Bus*, Chapter 7; *Two Stories about Flying*, Chapter 3

Explanation

- The question asks you to **compare AND contrast** — examiners look for both similarities and differences clearly stated.
- The young seagull (*His First Flight*) is the most natural choice since it is from the paired chapter *Two Stories about Flying* mentioned in the question.
- Keep similarities and differences distinct — don't mix them.
- Valli's traits from the passage: thrifty, determined, independent, planned carefully, resisted temptations.
- Stay within 120–150 words; this answer is approximately 130 words.
- The opening line format is given in the question — always use it as instructed.

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